


LUCIFER.



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WHOLE No. 973

Justice to the Unborn.

In No. 969 Lizzie M. Holmes takes me to task for giving my opinion as to the steps which must be taken in order that children may be born well. She gives several reasons for her disapproval, one being that "in our present stage of progression nobody knows anything about the laws of heredity or prenatal influence."

So far as prenatal influence is concerned, Mrs. Holmes is right; indeed, most biologists are at least skeptical about the existence of any such thing. With heredity it is very different. Here we are on firm ground, for, although there is much we do not know about heredity, yet we are sure of the great essential fact that like begets like.

Mrs. Holmes seems to concede without reserve the fact of animal heredity and the astonishing achievements of breeders. But she holds the old theological view, that a certain mammal called man is essentially different from other animals. She believes that a law which operates with absolute uniformity from the lowest plant to the highest ape suddenly stops at man, and that we cannot argue from animal to human heredity.

On the contrary, I assert that the aforesaid law of heredity applies as strictly to man as to all other animals, and has been observed in all ages so to apply.

In the first place, we observe that human parents always have human children. Moreover, we know that race characters are transmitted with perfect regularity. Negroes beget negroes, and whites beget whites. These are strange coincidences, if like does not beget like.

We also see every day that personal features are transmitted. When a baby is born, the first question is whether it is like its father or its mother. The fact that parents and children, brothers and sisters, resemble each other, is so well known that I need not dwell on it.

But what about mental heredity? Well, what about it? Do we not constantly hear it said that So-and-So has "the Smith temper," or "the Wilson manner," or "the Brown selfishness"? Is it possible that any one has not observed the mental as well as the physical resemblances which run in families?

Fortunately we have statistics to verify our observations. Great musical talent is very exceptional, while the faculty of musical composition is so rare that the appearance by mere accident of two musical composers in one family would be a strange phenomenon. Yet in two or three generations the family of Bach produced no less than one hundred highly skilled musicians, of whom at least three or four had a genius for musical composition. Whoever wants plenty of facts about mental heredity should read Galton's "Hereditary Genius."

It is equally clear that vicious propensities run in families. Everybody has heard of the Jukes family, of which considerably more than a hundred criminal, insane or drunken members have been traced. I was reading only a few weeks ago of a professor

in Bonn who has traced the descent of several hundred drunkards from one drunken woman of the eighteenth century.

But, says Mrs. Holmes, "I believe it is generally conceded that hereditary influences do not count much against surroundings after the child is born." I should like to know the name of any biologist who ever conceded anything of the sort. Meanwhile, let me quote from one who did not.

In his "Life and Letters" (I., page 22) Charles Darwin says: "I am inclined to agree with Francis Galton in believing that education and environment produce only a small effect on the mind of any one, and that most of our qualities are innate." I think that this is exaggerated, but it is true every day we see the failure and wreck of those who have every advantage of surroundings and the success of those who have none. Immediately after reading Mrs. Holmes' article I took up the *Clarion* and read one of the famous articles of Robert Blatchford on "Science and Religion." Surely Blatchford is a wonderful example of what can be done in spite of bad surroundings. He was brought up in the deepest poverty. He says in "Merrie England": "I have picked up half a dozen empty bottles off as many ashpits, when a child, and sold them for a penny to buy coal. I have gone out many a time to buy a quarter of an ounce of tea and a farthing's worth of milk." Yet without any assistance he has become the best journalist in England and the author of the most successful Socialist book ever written. That is heredity, not environment.

Why, then, is it that so many people are less certain about human than animal heredity? The reason is simple. Each one of us has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents, and so on. Not only are we likely to inherit from either parent, but it is very probable that we shall inherit qualities that were latent in our parents, but appeared in our remoter ancestors. Nothing is more common than a boy who is liker his grandfather than his father. To have a perfectly exact knowledge of a man's heredity we should know all about every ancestor for many generations. We have that knowledge about racehorses, prize dogs and other well-bred animals; but I doubt if there is a man living who knows anything about all his sixteen great-great-grandparents. In the future, however, as much interest will be taken in breeding men as in breeding horses, and then full particulars of pedigree will be carefully preserved.

Of course, heredity is not an exact science. You may take the two best racehorses of the year and breed from them, but you cannot be sure that the foal will ever win the Derby. It is merely a science of averages and approximations, but that has not hindered breeders from effecting revolutions by skillful selection. It is the same with men. We cannot say that the son of tall parents will be tall, but we can say that the average height of the children of tall parents is greater than that of the children of short parents, and that the best chance for a child to be tall is to have tall parents and ancestors.

When we know that like begets like, we know all we need to accomplish any miracle of breeding. Whatever quality we

wish to develop, we have to keep on breeding from people who possess that quality and we shall develop it to any extent we please.

No other responsibility is so great as that of parenthood.

We are descended from creatures that lived many millions of years ago, and millions of years hence the world will be filled by the descendants of those who are living now. I am convinced that happiness and misery depend more on inherited temperament than on any external conditions. The philosophy of pessimism was written by Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, who had everything they could wish for; while a poor Italian organ-grinder is often the happiest of men. The only way to be happy is to have happy parents and grandparents, and that is much the same as having healthy ones. At the risk of incensing Mrs. Holmes still further, I would suggest that all who think of becoming parents should remember that the happiness or misery of all future generations depend to some extent on their action.

R. B. KERR.

Prostitution and Mental Healing.

EDITOR LUCIFER: It is a long while since I have written anything to Lucifer, for reasons which those who have read it since October last must understand, though they do not know as much about them as you and I. The contents of No. 970 have roused me, however, to make another effort.

In many respects this is one of the most interesting numbers that has yet appeared. The contributors cover a wide field, they deal with subjects of the highest importance to the sexual problem, there is a radical difference in their methods as well as their conclusions, but it all turns about one vital point.

First on the list stands George Brown, from whose article I learn the following maxims in sexual philosophy:

1. No animal except woman is a prostitute.
2. Every woman is a bit of a prostitute.
3. By becoming a prostitute, a woman has socialized and humanized the sexual function and greatly increased the happiness of life.
4. Woman became a prostitute to please man.
5. Nothing ever prevents her being a prostitute except that man does not want her to.
6. When she is a prostitute she is only an animal.
7. When man has cured her of being a prostitute she becomes human.
8. Man, though he be an angel, cannot cure her of being a prostitute.
9. Because nothing is so congenial to her as prostitution.
10. Many women have ceased, and all will cease, to be prostitutes.
11. This is effected by pitying prostitutes and honoring women who are not prostitutes.

If this were all, I should leave Mr. Brown to reconcile 1 with 6; 2 with 10 and 11; 3 with 7 and 11; 4 with 5; 7 with 8 and 10; 9 with 4, etc., etc.,—propositions which strike me as contradictory.

But now comes Carrie Austin, and explains that "the marriage question" is one of those which "will not yield to the methods of physical science nor to the lower faculties of the human mind"—such as the logical, which teaches that of two contradictory propositions, like George Brown's 3 and 6, one must be true and the other false. Questions of this subtle character can be settled only by instinct—that is, by reference to traditional notions and prejudices, like Mr. Brown's, without regard for either evidence or consistency.

Lest there should be any doubt of Carrie Austin's meaning, she informs us that "in this royal road to understanding it is each one for himself." It is only "the childish, man-made inventions [of logic and induction] which at their highest working capacity yield [she says scarcely, but I will take the freedom to substitute even] a grain of truth for a lifetime." The God-made method of instinct leaves every one free not merely to have his opinions, but to advance them, in the true spirit of dogmatism, as self-evident, no matter how much they disagree with other people's instincts, the facts, or one another! Not much truth-finding there.

Carrie Austin leaves us in no want of illustrations. "It was in this way that Jesus the Christ grew in wisdom, with no other effort than a mental-spiritual one." It was, it was! It was exactly in that way that this most illogical of geniuses launched upon the world an unrivaled jumble of great thoughts and crude absurdities, which latter, being alone intelligible to his ignorant disciples, produced the Dark Ages.

It is a relief to turn from such stuff as this to R. B. Kerr and Dora Forster, who may indeed make some mistakes, but apply as well as they can that inductive method by which alone a "grain of truth" has ever been crammed down the unwilling throat of ignorance, calling itself intuition. Mr. Kerr does not seem to know much about those immense contributions to the science of heredity which have been made by Lombroso and his school; but he does know that offspring are like their ancestors—that figs are not gathered from thorns nor grapes from thistles—that passions which must result in propagating consumption or insanity are bad for the race, all talk about "barnyard morals" to the contrary notwithstanding. And how does he know it?

By the exercise of "the lower faculties of the human mind, which barely yield a grain of truth for a lifetime spent in their application"—by the method of induction—the method of work, of patience, of observation, of experiment, of record, which alone has ever enabled any one to learn anything.

Similarly, Dora Forster sees clearly that no light is shed on the sexual problem by such assertions as that "the magnetic tie" originated in "the divine instinct," by virtue of which man would be like his Father-Mother parent—so blended that they represent "one God!" She is aware the real origin of marriage can be learned only by such "childish man-made methods" as history and archeology—which show that it originated in the exclusive claims of big chiefs to captives. She understands that such questions as whether woman's love tends more or less to variety than man's are not to be decided by "instinct," but only by a very wide induction, taking due account of all differences in environment. She even appears to see through a very common error—that of confounding variety and mutability, and either, but especially the former, with sensuality. My own experience, which I give only as that of one person—but which, for that, is pretty extensive—teaches me that variety-loves are usually permanent; that it is the seeker after unreal affinities who changes his feelings, and that the latter condition is more associated with sensual and animal passion than the other.

Carrie Austin says, "Just as medicine is being superseded by . . . the mental cure . . . so our present awkward and inefficient methods of truth-seeking [by reason, the peculiar faculty of man] will be replaced by"—her favorite instinct, the faculty man shares with brutes.

The comparison is perfect. The rational and the intuitional methods are strictly parallel in the two cases; and in both it is as false as possible that the rational is giving way to the other. In both the rational is rapidly superseding the intuitional. Your life has been devoted to substituting Reason for alleged instinct in the relation of the sexes. Can you help seeing now that what resists this change in sexual matters is just exactly what resists it in everything else? What, in regard to medicine, was the method of "Jesus the Christ" and all the vagabond thaumaturgists before his time or since? To talk nonsense to the sick about "mental cure," take the credit if they lived, and if they died say the angels took them to a better country!

If you doubt this is analogous to the method by which sexual relations have been regulated, till science (largely medical) began to deal with them, Carrie Austin shall be witness that it is. She says, indeed, she wants no laws to enforce absurdity in either case. But you will catch a Tartar if you believe it. Nonsense unbacked by laws has no show against science. Vivisection and anti-toxins are driving the destroying angel of cholera and the sweet little cherub which presides over diphtheria off the earth, with the Abbe Edgeworth's valediction, "Ascend to heaven—nobody wants you here!"

Then what is the Movement in Favor of Ignorance going to do about it? If you wish to know read the *Animal's Defender*, and you will soon learn that the Movement in Favor of Ignorance is always for "more laws," and more Comstocks to enforce them or to levy blackmail upon condition of leaving them unenforced. The Movement in Favor of Ignorance is a brute; and as it appeals from reason, the faculty of man, to instinct, the faculty which connects man with brute, so it will always, on occasion, appeal from that to force, in which the brute is entirely unveiled.

This grotesque chameleon, which has no color but that of the object it happens to be upon, and which can swim to no port because its members do not match, has yet a brain (situated at Rome) and a spinal cord which, governed by its Jesuit manipulators, will always be able to stick one claw or another in the way of any advance of knowledge. Therefore, it is an organism, which to aid at any point is to aid at every point. And therefore, to oppose it equally at all points is the obvious policy of whoever aims to substitute reason for dogmas calling themselves intuitions in anything, as you do in respect to sexual matters.

C. L. JAMES.

REPLY.

The persons and journal named in the above will probably want space for reply. For myself, I wish only to say, in reference to the very guarded, not to say ambiguous, criticism contained in the first paragraph, that looking back through the file I find an article of nearly two columns' length signed C. L. James in No. 957—or a little over three months since—and it strikes me that to give another page now of our limited space does not show very great discrimination against our critic; and would simply add that while I would by no means disparage the merits of our *Bau Claire* correspondent, neither am I insensible to his demerits, prominent among which is his exaggerated opinion of his rights and of the value of his writings to *Lucifer's* readers. Judging from many letters received from these readers, the disproportion between his own estimate and theirs is something enormous. Trying hard to be just to all, I feel sure that, all things considered, no man has been shown greater favors in *Lucifer's* columns than has the writer of the above article.

M. H.

Character and Heredity.

So much that is pleasing to peruse and valuable to know has appeared from various pens that I often wish to extend commendation to the *Lucifer* editors and contributors, but must desist and offer a little constructive criticism instead.

Adeline Champney and others endeavoring to clarify their thinking may find it profitable to have the following points put before them for consideration:

The first law of heredity, "like begets like," persists in all reproduction, with variations of differing degrees.

The fact that all bees of one breed are practically alike in consequence of this law of heredity may not apply any more strictly in the science of the reproduction of the human race than if it were a fact that every individual bee differed from every other.

Reasoning by analogies, by comparisons, is often so misleading. In fact, all dogmas persist on the strength of analogies that appeal to most minds as logical.

The strength of the heredity argument as related to man lies in the point-blank fact that among the many animals like begets like with such force that these inherited tendencies control the conduct and character of the subject through life. Generally speaking, this is the argument, with its boundless examples among horses, dogs, bovines and other species of animals.

By analogy we proceed to prove that it holds good among men. But note that these most conspicuous examples are oftentimes the abnormal. Among mankind about three-fifths of those born into the world die before five years old; among the survivors not many are weaklings or abnormal, but note how conspicuously an inherited weakness appears among the surviving few! Abnormal eccentricities may be accentuated, and some of these, such as appear to us as evidences of strength of charac-

ter are really abnormalities, and more often, perhaps, accelerated in development by the approbation of others rather than by unusual hereditary endowment.

The conclusion that among the human race physical characteristics closely correspond to the first law of heredity may be well substantiated. That it does not operate or has not been operated as strictly as among the vertebrates mentioned before is quite evident. It seems to me that the fact is this. In our comparisons with animals we forget that man has a brain—a cerebrum, and not simply a cerebellum.

Among physiologists, psychologists, and phrenologists it is known that whatever function the little brain or cerebellum may have, it is at least the nervous seat of sex, just as the cerebrum is the nervous source of our sight-seeing power, if I understand correctly. It may not be contrary to scientific conclusions to say that the little brain is the motor that furnishes nervous energy to control our voluntary and involuntary motions. It is pre-eminently the brain of the animal. In racehorses it is inordinately large, since their power of motion is so much cultivated. This cultivation lends vigor to hereditary traits in reproduction that perhaps could not be acquired by man with his complex brain. It is probably the seat and source of instinct and of instinctive impulses. Animal characteristics may conform to the law of heredity, and consequently the more abnormal the recipient of hereditary traits, the more his mental caliber, his character and consequently his conduct will conform to these inherited traits. The kleptomaniac is an abnormality; the dawdling idiot, actuated but by inherited animal instincts, is another. The idiot is heir to an abnormal cerebrum.

Given a healthy body and a normal brain, and the force of environment will defy all the known laws of heredity as far as mental characteristics are concerned.

If I and my brother are reared by the same mother, nursed at the same breast, raised in the same surroundings under the same roof, heredity should make us alike. We are accustomed to account for opposing traits in children of the same parents with a mental assurance that is exasperating. If "it's inherited," why am I not combative like my brother? If it is not, then we have a thousand factors that may account for this disparity in disposition.

Who can say with assured certainty that some characteristics are like those of the father, others of the mother, by reason of heredity, when all these factors of surroundings and association would tend to secure that result? Who can say that it may not be a little of both? Is not the conclusion valid that the force of environment is invaluable, and the best known, most definite and most available factor we can deal with?

Then, fathers, mothers, friends, and brothers, let us search to apply this factor of environment to the largest advantage.

Environment has no effect on an idiot—that is proof positive to heredity, so let us beware! Too much heredity, you know, might not mend the world. By better environment I do not mean to ignore the prenatal, since ignorance in that realm has originated all the world's idiots (excepting unavoidable misfortunes), while ignoring the power of circumstances, the factors of environment, has manufactured most of the world's fools. I insist that our chief source of remedy for human malformations in mentality must come from correct postnatal care and training.

You cannot breed men like animals in any way, and even could you crystallize mental characteristics so that their reproduction could be fashioned after that which operates in reproducing animal instinct we would not choose the result.

Enforced motherhood is an unendurable slavery, but a State-enforced and a State-supervised sexuality would be slavery gone insane.

Love defines the method and includes the choicest heredity in its results. Individual judgment must be the only criterion. As Lizzie Holmes says, let the individual judgment be free, but allow Mr. Kerr and Mr. Wells to teach what they can, while we, each of us, will judge of its merits and abide by the result.

With the normal man environment determines character, his conduct and his fate; heredity his physique, his health, perhaps (and these factors are the chief that heredity can claim), but as against environment are, as I believe, far the least.

CASSIUS V. COOK

Lucifer, the Lightbearer

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Lucifer—Its Meaning and Purpose.

LUCIFER—The planet Venus; so called from its brightness.—*Webster's Dictionary.*

LUCIFEROUS—Giving Light; affording light or the means of discovery.—*Same.*

LUCIFIC—Producing Light.—*Same.*

LUCIFORM—Having the form of Light.—*Same.*

The name Lucifer means Light-Bringing or Light-Bearing, and the paper that has adopted this name stands for Light against Darkness—for Reason against Superstition—for Science against Tradition—for Investigation and Enlightenment against Credulity and Ignorance—for Liberty against Slavery—for Justice against Privilege.

A Word to the Reader.

The mottoes and maxims at the head of this week's editorial, also the rejoinder by Editor Macdonald to articles previously printed in Lucifer, serve as excellent texts for an elaborated exposition of what Freethought means, and why the movement inaugurated in Philadelphia in 1876 has failed to realize the expectations of its projectors. It has been quite impossible to do the matter justice in one number, and therefore our readers are requested to keep this week's issue till next week, so that the two editorials from these texts may be read as one continuous article.

M. H.

The Truth of History Once More—Ingersoll, Macdonald, Quinn, Schilling.

"We must live in the truth."—*T. P. Quinn.*

"Here's freedom for him that wad read; here's freedom for him that wad write; there's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard, 'cept them that the truth wad indict."—*Robert Burns.*

"We will speak out, we will be heard, though all earth's systems crack; we will not bate a single word, nor take a letter back."—*J. R. Lowell.*

"Nothing extenuate and naught set down in malice."—*Old Maxim.*

"Be true to your own act and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant and broken the monotony of a decorous age. . . . Do not take back your words; a simple, manly character need never make an apology."—*R. W. Emerson.*

"God forbid that you should not be allowed to comment on the conduct of all mankind, provided you do it justly and honorably."—*Baron Alderson.*

Among the editorials of the Truth Seeker, New York, for May 30, is the following, under the head "Still Unconverted":

"Moses Harman is still harping on the absurd charge he made against Colonel Ingersoll—that the latter was not in sympathy with the workingmen of the country. All that he has to sustain such a charge is a story by a Mr. T. P. Quinn that once upon a time Col. Ingersoll applied an unprintable epithet to the workers. He asks us to print Mr. Quinn's epithet, and we distinctly refuse to do it. Mr. Quinn's letter itself shows that Mr. Harman had no ground to charge that Colonel Ingersoll did not try to help the Chicago Anarchists, and George Schilling has since reinforced Mr. Quinn in this matter, showing that Colonel Ingersoll not only thought the accused men unfairly tried, but endeavored to save them from the gallows. Why Mr. Harman should chew upon the matter we do not see, except he feels himself in the wrong and is trying to flounder out. Some portions of his two page articles on the subject—for he is talking about everything he ever heard of except the point itself—seem to indicate that Mr. Harman dislikes Colonel Ingersoll because the

Colonel once delivered a sort of panegyric on marriage, a poetic tribute which we have often quoted. It is the opinion of a man happily married, expressed in magnificent and happy language which would occur only to Ingersoll or Shakespeare. This is what galls Mr. Harman, who appears to think that marriage is rather more of an evil than a blessing. He has a right to his opinion upon the subject, but, as a good Anarchist, he ought to admit that Colonel Ingersoll had an equal right to his opinion. To a man up a tree it looks as though one overrated and the other underrated the state of double blessedness. Different persons look at the matter differently, according to their experience and observation. Marriage is not all beer and skittles; neither is it an unmitigated evil.

"We have printed enough from Colonel Ingersoll to show whether or not he sympathized with the labor of the world and with the poor man. In a moment of disgust with the stupidity of the great mass of ill-educated and superstitious workingmen he criticized them, it would not be in the words attributed to him. Of course we cannot prove that he did not tell Mr. Quinn what Mr. Quinn says he did, for we were not present at any interviews between the two. But Mr. Quinn seems to have no one to sustain him, and the interview, if it ever took place, must have been so extremely private that a public repetition of the words then uttered constitutes one of those offenses which push a man a little beyond the demarcation of the territory inhabited by gentlemen. Mr. Harman has refuted himself on every point at issue but this, and for this he depends on the word of one man, reared a Roman Catholic, never affiliated with Freethought and unknown to Freethinkers. To this we oppose the Colonel's public record; and the unlikelihood that Colonel Ingersoll would publicly speak for the workingmen, privately try to save the Anarchists from the gallows, publicly condemn their trial as unfair—and this at a period before other prominent men, like Lyman Gage, had discovered it or dared to say it—and then in the deep privacy of his office confide to a Mr. Quinn that in his opinion the workingmen were properly described by an unprintable epithet, and not worth working for or saving. Colonel Ingersoll sometimes used a broad illustration, as did Lincoln, but he was never vulgar for vulgarity's sake, and there is nothing in Mr. Quinn's story but vulgarity. We do not believe that Colonel Ingersoll used the words, nor held the sentiment, attributed to him."

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Those who have read Lucifer for the past few months know that an attempt has been made in these columns to show that the movement inaugurated in 1876, called the National Liberal League, is now practically dead—dead so far as the central objects of the movement are concerned—and that the leaders of the organization growing out of that movement, now called the National Secular Union, have joined the forces of reaction, of conservatism, of political and social inequality, of despotism and slavery for the masses.

Is it asked why I make such statements? Am I the guardian angel of the American Freethought movement? Am I my brother's keeper?

As well ask why I criticize and condemn the acts of the present leaders of the Republican party. I joined the Republican party because I believed it to be the party of progress, the party of freedom, of equality and justice for all. I left that political organization when it became the party of reaction, of conservatism, of privilege for the few and slavery for the many; and since that time I have regarded it as part of my duty as a man and citizen, as well as journalist, to show up its apostasies, its treasons to the principles which that party once stood sponsor for.

For a like reason I now regard it a leading part of my duty to self and others to show up the apostasies, the treasons to principle, so conspicuous, as I see it, in the leaders of the once forward movement called the National Liberal League.

I joined that movement in 1879, and helped to form local leagues in Kansas. I worked with the national organization until it left me—left me by adopting the tactics of reaction, of conservatism; until I saw that the leaders of the movement had become "Tories of a new type," to quote Herbert Spencer.

Freethought journalism is not easy; it imposes duties that are not always pleasant. One of these duties is that of watchman, of sentinel, to warn of dangers from within as well as from without the camp of liberty; for, as we all know, "A man's foes are often they of his own household."

Disagreeable as was the task, I have quoted the late utterances of two men who seem to claim the position of authoritative exponents of American Freethought—Eugene Macdonald, president of the National Secular Union and editor of the Truth Seeker, New York, and H. L. Green, editor of the Freethought Magazine of this city—as evidence of such reaction, of such treason to principle.

The Truth Seeker was founded about twenty-five years ago by D. M. Bennett, who was imprisoned for alleged violation of the federal statutes against the circulation of what is called "obscene literature" through the federal mails. Largely because of this persecution the Freethinkers of America rallied to the support of the Truth Seeker and made it the leading Freethought weekly in America, if not in the world, so far as patronage and size are concerned. It is doubtless true that in the last twenty-five years D. M. Bennett's paper has been the recipient of more volunteer financial aid than has any other Freethought paper in the United States, if not more than have all other such papers put together—very largely because the Truth Seeker was believed to represent as did no other journal the principle of freedom of speech, press and mails, in defense of which its founder suffered imprisonment.

Another very efficient cause of its financial success was the fact that the Truth Seeker made a specialty of publishing and circulating the works of Robert G. Ingersoll, the most popular of American Freethought writers and orators. In the language of T. B. Wakeman, the present editor of the Truth Seeker seems to have "swallowed Ingersoll whole." An old-time friend and supporter of the Truth Seeker, a personal friend of D. M. Bennett, writes me in a private letter: "Eugene is thoroughly committed to Ingersoll and can see no weakness in the hero to whom he devotes his worship."

It is because of their devotion to Ingersoll that this present controversy was begun between the editors of the Truth Seeker and Freethought Magazine, and myself. As our readers know, this discussion, so far as it has been personal, was not of my seeking. I have stood on the defensive, simply claiming my right as a journalist and citizen to criticize the great Agnostic orator on his attitude toward the laboring masses—but making this criticism the introduction to an article two columns in length which was almost wholly favorable to the name and fame of Ingersoll, which fact was entirely ignored by my opponents.

This much by way of explanation for those who have not read previous numbers of Lucifer and who would otherwise not be able to comprehend the animus of the editorial just quoted at the head of this article.

On showing the rejoinder in question to a good friend and generous helper in this city—a man of large experience in the political and economic field—he said, in substance:

"This rejoinder needs little or no answer from you. It is its own sufficient answer. Garrison's method is best in cases like this—simply to print the attack and label it 'The Opposition,' leaving your readers to draw their own conclusions."

For those who have followed the discussion since it began in the issue of Feb. 12, whole number 956, this advice would be all right, but perhaps not half of those who will read this issue of Lucifer have followed the discussion, which on my part has been devoted to general principles rather than to matters of a personal nature.

Briefly, then, as possible—not to take up too much space—I would say that Macdonald's rejoinder is an admirable one—admirable from the standpoint of a LAWYER, a lawyer who feels himself bound to wring a verdict from his jury by any and every means in his power. "All is fair in love and war"—law is war. I can easily understand that an attorney with a desperate case might resort to equivocation, misrepresentation and downright falsehood, but the man who believes himself justified in the adoption of such expedients certainly merits our profound pity.

In the space allowed I can only notice a few of the "mistakes of Macdonald," calling them by no harsher name.

MACDONALD VS. QUINN.

The following letter received from one of the best known and most highly respected of the Freethinkers of Chicago ought to be conclusive as to the charge against T. P. Quinn because of religious belief:

MOSES HARMAN: The attempt of the editor of the Truth Seeker to discredit Mr. Quinn because he is, or was reared, a Roman Catholic, is absurd. True, Quinn's parents were Irish Catholics, but his father was actively connected with the Fenian movement, and because of this he was refused absolution by the priest. Young Quinn heard his father complain of this very bitterly to his mother; in consequence of which Quinn, from his earliest recollection, began to feel that the priesthood was opposed to the liberty of the people. The fact is Quinn never was under the influence of the Roman Church. If Quinn is not so prominently known as a Freethinker, it is because he has always been active in the economic field and has very little in common with that class of Freethinkers who simply wish to dethrone God, but who leave untouched the political and industrial institutions that foster tyrants on this earth.

Chicago, May 30.

GEORGE A. SCHILLING.

THE OBSCENITY CHARGE.

That "unprintable epithet": Very naturally the reader will infer from what he says that I specially asked Macdonald to print an epithet usually considered unclean, "obscene" or "vulgar." A man who claims to be a truth seeker should be also a truth speaker! I did not so ask. In printing the letter from T. P. Quinn to me I left out two words, substituting blanks, not because I considered the words obscene, but to spare the sensibilities of those who have not yet outgrown the "obscenity" superstition. In copying into the Truth Seeker part of Quinn's letter to me—but leaving out one of the most important paragraphs—Macdonald DID THE SAME; that is, he substituted blanks for the objectionable words. In copying the longer letter, at Mr. Quinn's suggestion, from Free Society, giving a more extended account of the interview with Ingersoll, I did just as Neighbor Isaac had done; that is, I substituted blanks for all the letters of the "unprintable epithet" except the first and the last letter of each word.

To print an epithet is to SPELL IT OUT. Hence the first allegation of Macdonald is false; false both as to fact and inference.

But suppose I had spelled it out and had asked him to do the same, what then?

It is well known that Ingersoll had no scruples against shocking people by words called "blasphemous" by church people and by words called "vulgar" by Madame Grundy—"vulgarity" being simply blasphemy against the canons of what is called good taste; vulgar meaning "common," from the Latin VULGUS, the "common people." But when the truth of history is at stake it may be quite justifiable to use EXACT words, though "offensive to ears polite." See mottoes at head of this article.

For the curious, I would say that one of the words objected to is the equivalent of the old Anglo Saxon and Bible word, "dung"—a very useful commodity, as we all know, to the agriculturist. The other word in the epithet is a mispronunciation of a dictionary word, an old Saxon word defined as "the buttocks; the posteriors of an animal."

NO OBSCENITY IN NATURE.

Though somewhat a digression, I would say just here that I do not recognize such a thing in nature as obscenity. Obscenity is a figment of a depraved imagination. No word is either bad or good of itself. Words represent ideas, and there is always a choice of words to express the same thought. I usually avoid the words called blasphemous and those called obscene, but have no conscientious scruples against their use because branded as bad by artificial and superstitious "society."

And this is perhaps as good a place as any to say that I very earnestly think good old D. M. Bennett made the mistake of his

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